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E.O. 12958: DECL: 06/13/2018
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SUBJECT: CICIG'S FIRST PUBLIC CASE

REF: GUATEMALA 355

Classified By: DCM David Lindwall for reasons 1.4 (b&d).

¶1. (U) On June 9, Guatemalan National Civilian Police (PNC) Director Isabel Mendoza announced the arrests of four senior policemen assigned to Zone 1, Guatemala's city center. Mendoza said the four were involved with a criminal gang known as "the Crazy Mariachi," and had robbed currency couriers, trucks, and had participated in other, unspecified crimes. He also said that these arrests were the first in which CICIG had been involved.

¶2. (C) CICIG Political Advisor Ana Garita (protect) confirmed to Pol/Econ Counselor June 11 that CICIG investigators had supported the PNC in this investigation. Asked whether these police officers were the same Zone 1 police officers CICIG Commissioner Castresana referred to in his March 14 conversation with the Ambassador (reftel), Garita said no, but that their arrests were the product of the same investigative effort. She said CICIG would consider intervening with the judge and Public Ministry to improve coordination in prosecuting this case. Garita noted this case was one in which CICIG had only assisted national authorities, but that it continued to also develop its own, fully independent investigations of other cases. CICIG's efforts on some of those would likely come to fruition and be made public in the July-August time frame.

¶3. (C) Comment. These arrests represent a modest first public achievement for CICIG. Some Guatemalan political observers and press had begun to question what CICIG is achieving after nine months on the ground. The announcement of these arrests should help temper critics while CICIG concludes more emblematic investigations.
Derham